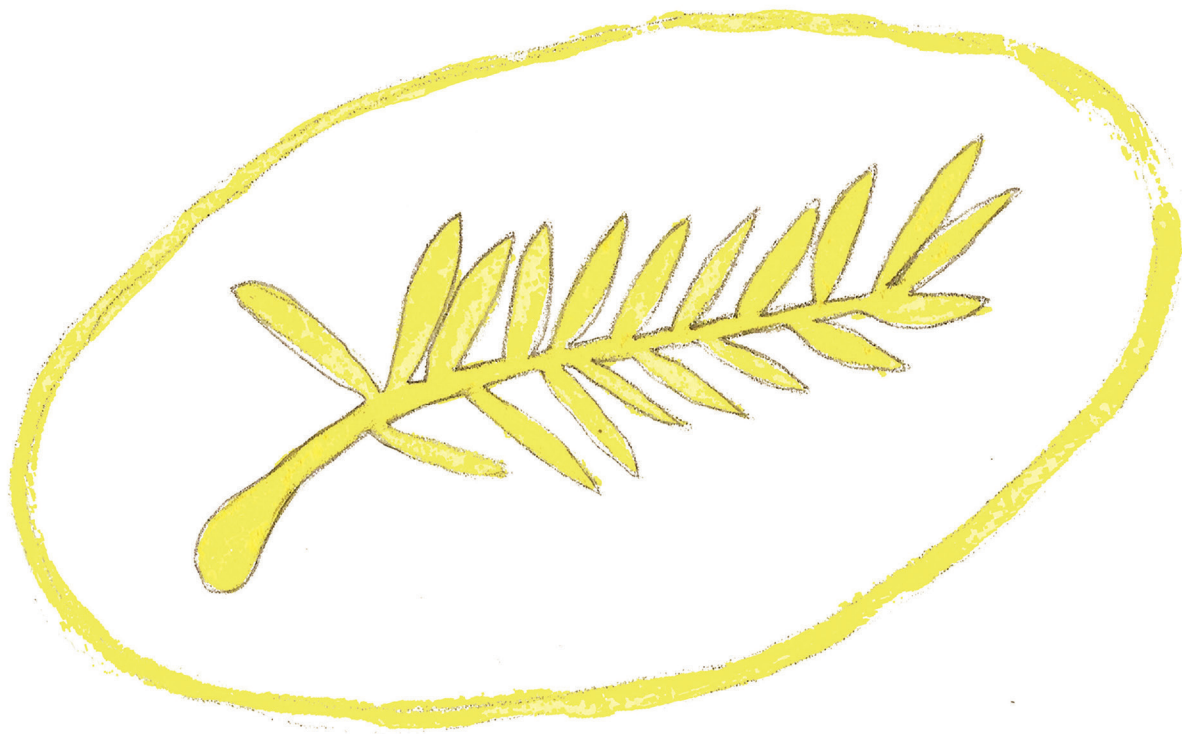


66th FESTIVAL DE CANNES

THE COMPETITION



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THURSDAY MAY 16TH

FRANÇOIS OZON **JEUNE & JOLIE (YOUNG & BEAUTIFUL)**

Background: French; born Paris, France 1967.

Known for / style: *8 Women* (2002), *Swimming Pool* (2003), *In the House* (2012); films with liberal philosophy towards sexuality; gay and lesbian themes; working with a repertory that includes Charlotte Rampling, Catherine Deneuve, Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi, and Melvil Poupaud.

Notable accolades: Given his embrace of LGBT themes, a substantial sheaf of Ozon's awards have come from events like the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (2006's Frameline award), L.A. Outfest (2000's Grand Jury Prize for 1999's *Criminal Lovers*), and the New York Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (2000's Best Feature award for *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*). Outside of those festivals, *In the House* did well in the general circuit, picking up the Jury Prize for Best Screenplay and the Golden Seashell at San Sebastián, while winning a FIPRESCI prize at TIFF.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Jeune et Jolie (Young and Beautiful)*, a sexy drama depicting four seasons in the life of a 17-year-old girl. That may sound vague, but the film's trailer implies prostitution (or other sexual grey areas) as the film's subject. Upcoming French actress Marina Vacth plays the young and beautiful lead, with Charlotte Rampling, Frédéric Pierrot, Géraldine Pailhas, and Nathalie Richard cast in supporting roles. *Jeune et Jolie* marks the fourth time Ozon has worked with Rampling.

Previous Cannes appearances: After two sidebar premieres (Ozon's short *A Summer Dress* hit the Croisette in 1996; *Sitcom* played in 1998), Ozon joined the Competition for 2003's *Swimming Pool*, with 2005's *Time to Leave* unspooling in Un Certain



Regard. Ozon's most recent film to debut at the Festival is 2006's *A Curtain Raiser*, a short that played Out of Competition.



Could it win the Palme? Ozon has yet to strike gold at Cannes, but this year holds no real indication that this will change. Echoing this is an April 19 *Vulture* article, "Can Hollywood Understand French Director François Ozon?," which underlines the uncertainty of Ozon's Palme potential. In other words, with Steven Spielberg's jury set to judge the Competition, *Vulture* may as well have titled their article: "Can Steven Spielberg Understand François Ozon?" Furthermore, we know that *Jeune et Jolie* is carried by a relatively unknown lead actress, which makes it harder to have utter confidence in the film's acting (of course, Charlotte Rampling's supporting role should minimize that variable). As it stands, courting the Hollywood giant could prove difficult for Ozon; on the other hand, the fifty-second preview for *Jeune et Jolie* is sleek and sexy.

Why you should care: Ozon was once known as the *enfant terrible* of French cinema, an intriguing title that says much about the director's provocative filmography. Having cranked out a film almost annually for the past 16 years, the productive Ozon has found some mainstream success touring the festival circuit with *In the House*, which opened in New York and Los Angeles last week. As for *Jeune et Jolie*, well... having watched the beguiling teaser (and it is a tease) the film looks both elegant and mysterious with a dash of carnal pleasure. Who would say no?

AMAT ESCALANTE **HELI**

Background: Mexican; born Barcelona, Spain, 1979.

Known for / style: *Sangre* (2005) and *Los Bastardos* (2008); a member of Nuevo Cine Mexicano (New Mexican cinema); collaborating with Carlos Reygadas; narratives that touch upon immigration, drug culture, sexual abuse, and violence.

Notable accolades: At the top of Escalante's awards shelf is his FIPRESCI prize for *Sangre* (2005) when it debuted in Un Certain Regard. Outside of Cannes, the Bratislava International Film Festival has been good to Escalante, bestowing upon him Best Director and a Student Jury Award for *Los Bastardos* (2008). The Thessaloniki International Film Festival gave *Sangre* its second-place Silver Alexander in 2005, with a purse of €22,000, while Sundance gave Escalante's latest, *Heli*, \$10,000 of production aid in the form of the NHK Award in 2010.

Previous Cannes appearances: A product of the Festival, both of Escalante's features have played in Un Certain Regard (*Sangre* and *Los Bastardos*). 2013 marks his first time in Competition.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Heli*, a drama shot and set in Escalante's town of Guanajuato, Mexico. When 12-year-old Estela falls madly in love with a young police officer, the violence of the region strikes her family and complicates her plans to marry the cadet. The film features unknowns Armando Espitia, Andrea Vergara, Linda Gonzalez and Juan Eduardo Palacios.

Could it win the Palme? With fellow Mexican auteur Carlos Reygadas winning Best Director at Cannes last year (*Post Tenebras Lux*), the doors may have opened for Escalante to follow his success, if the film holds up (fitting, as Reygadas holds a producer's credit on *Heli*). Escalante, who was assistant director on Reygadas' *Battle*

in Heaven (2005), has yet to compete for the Palme, meaning his jump from Un Certain Regard to the Competition is something Thierry Frémaux felt was the next step in Escalante's budding career. And if the jury is looking for an extra reason to give Escalante some love, well—Mexico hasn't been attached to a Palme d'Or in over forty years, and given the real (and very brutal) drug violence that occurs in modern-day Mexico, *Heli*'s external relevance could be off the charts.

Why you should care: Working alongside his friend and producer Carlos Reygadas, Cannes has chosen Escalante to join the established auteurs. While he has yet to gain major traction with North American audiences, that could change in but a few weeks' time. From a cinephile's perspective, however, *Heli* sounds intriguing and powerful; a devastating look at a horrible problem plaguing the Mexican landscape at large.



ASGHAR FARHADI **LE PASSÉ (THE PAST)**

Background: Iranian; born Isfahan, Iran, 1972.

Known for / styles: *Fireworks Wednesday* (2006), *About Elly* (2009), *A Separation* (2011); narratives with ambiguous moralities; a third-generation Iranian New Wave filmmaker; writing short films and television episodes for the Islamic Republic of Iranian Broadcasting.

Notable accolades: After winning the Golden Bear at the 2011 Berlinale, the incredible *A Separation* went on a world-tour winning spree, securing Best Foreign Language prizes almost everywhere it played. The film was also submitted as Iran's official entry to the 84th Academy Awards, for which it won the country's first and only Oscar to date. But *A Separation* is not Farhadi's only major awards player: *About Elly* won the Silver Bear at the 2009 Berlinale and the Best Narrative Feature award at Tribeca, while *Fireworks Wednesday* won Chicago International's Gold Hugo.

Previous Cannes appearances: None of Farhadi's films have played in the Festival, but his stunning filmography is ample reason for the Festival to vet him straight to Competition.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Le Passé (The Past)*, a French-language drama starring Tahar Rahim (the lead in Cannes Grand Prix-winning *A Prophet*), Bérénice Bejo (Peppy Miller in 2012 Best Picture *The Artist*), and Ali Mosaffa (*The Last Step*, which starred *A Separation* lead Leila Hatami). The film involves a tricky divorce and a hidden past.

Could it win the Palme? The stars are aligned: Farhadi's career is hotter than ever, and his latest leading cast has two French favorites (Rahim and Bejo won Césars for *A Prophet* and *The Artist*, respectively). Bejo and Rahim's presence likely means Farhadi has a Jury ally in French actor Daniel Auteuil (*Caché*). Furthermore, Iran's first and only Palme d'Or remains Abbas Kiarostami's *Taste of Cherry* (1997), which is a shame, given how important Iranian cinema



is in the global conversation. The ongoing plight of Jafar Panahi, Mohammad Rasoulof and other suppressed Iranian filmmakers would allow the 2013 Jury to get political, showing support against crippling censorship and wrongful propaganda charges—perhaps by name-dropping Farhadi's contemporaries when presenting him with an award. This is assuming *The Past* is any good, of course, but the trailer and Farhadi's pedigree make it easy to assume a certain degree of quality.

Why you should care: In the midst of unchecked Iranian censorship is Asghar Farhadi, who managed to penetrate the resistive bubble of the North American film industry with *A Separation*. In theory, Farhadi's continued fortune could help other Iranian filmmakers physically leave the country, and given how fundamental free speech is in the Western world, the success of Iranian cinema is crucial for all of us. If *The Past* is merely good, it will still be a key victory for Farhadi and his fellow compatriots. If it is great, well—we're in for something special.



JIA ZHANGKE **TIAN ZHU DING (A TOUCH OF SIN)**

Background: Chinese; born Fenyang, Shanxi, China, 1970. "Jia" is Zhangke's family name.

Known for / styles: *The World* (2004), *Still Life* (2006), *24 City* (2008); a leader in Sixth Generation Chinese cinema, a culturally-subversive filmmaking movement founded post-Tiananmen Square; shooting documentaries, shorts, and features on shoestring budgets and digital video; casting non-actors.

Notable accolades: Jia has been the subject of continued adoration from the Venice Film Festival, which has awarded him the Netpac Award for *Platform* (2000), the Doc/It Award and an Open Prize for *Dong* (2006), the Venice Horizons Documentary Award for *Wuyong* (2007), and finally the Golden Lion itself (*Still Life*, 2006). In 2007, *Still Life* also landed Jia an Asian Film Award for Best Director, while the Los Angeles Film Critics Association named it Best Foreign Film the year it released stateside (2007).

Previous Cannes appearances: Jia has played in Competition twice (*Unknown Pleasures*, 2002; *24 City*, 2008) and once in Un Certain Regard (*I Wish I Knew*, 2010). In 2007, he was the President of the Cinéfondation's Short Film jury.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Tian Zhu Ding (A Touch of Sin)*, a multi-pronged and interwoven narrative that follows four different stories from four different regions. The film is "a reflection on contemporary China: an economic giant slowly being eroded by violence," starring Zhao Tao (Jia's wife), Jiang Wu (*Wu Xia*), Wang Baoqiang (*Lost in Thailand*), and newcomer Luo Lanshan. The title riffs on *A Touch of Zen*, King Hu's 1971 *wuxia* picture that was the first Chinese action film to win a prize at Cannes (the Technical Grand Prize).



Could it win the Palme? Superficially, it should be noted that Jia is the Venice Film Festival's golden boy—but Cannes is not to be outdone. But with Taiwanese-American Ang Lee on the jury, Jia should be in good hands. Recently beating jury president Steven Spielberg in the Best Director Oscar race, the *Life of Pi* director certainly swings a big stick. That's good news for Jia, as it could be up to Lee to argue for *A Touch of Sin's* merit. Then again, if Jia's latest is on the same level Venice claims he's at (and the film is broadly appealing), we could be looking at China's second Palme d'Or, after Chen Kaige's 1993 *Farewell My Concubine*.

Why you should care: China's Sixth Generation filmmakers are compelled to lash out against censorship and other such restrictions, which is why NPR described Jia Zhangke as perhaps "the most important filmmaker working in the world today"—and with the landscape of the film industry rapidly bending to the will of the Chinese markets, it seems critical for us to listen to their independent voices, regardless if *A Touch of Sin* is worthy of a Palme d'Or.



ARNAUD DESPLECHIN **JIMMY P. (PSYCHOTHERAPY OF A PLAINS INDIAN)**

Background: French; born Roubaix, France, 1960.

Known for / style: *A Christmas Tale* (2008), *Kings and Queens* (2004), *My Sex Life... or How I Got into an Argument* (1996); directing adaptations, experimenting with documentary, avant-garde techniques, and Brechtian frameworks; working with Mathieu Amalric, Catherine Deneuve, László Szabó and Emmanuelle Devos.

Notable accolades: Though primarily concerned with fiction, Desplechin doc *The Beloved* landed the "Doc/It" award at Venice 2007. His narratives, meanwhile, found love at the Étoiles d'Or, giving the filmmaker three of their title prizes (Best Director 2008 for *A Christmas Tale*, Best Director and Best Film for 2004's *Kings and Queen*). In 2009, the National Society of Film Critics (of America) nominated *A Christmas Tale* for Best Screenplay, losing in the end to Mike Leigh's *Happy-Go-Lucky*.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Jimmy P. (Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian)*, formerly titled "Jimmy Picard," a drama adapted from the Georges Devereux text *Psychothérapie d'un Indien des Plaines: Réalité et rêve*. The film depicts a Blackfoot veteran's return from World War II and his resulting struggle with mental illness. Benicio del Toro plays the title role, while Mathieu Amalric plays Georges Devereux, Jimmy Picard's psychoanalyst. Elya Baskin stars beside the pair.

Previous Cannes appearances: Desplechin's first Cannes premiere was in 1991, where *La Vie Des Morts* played in a sidebar program. Since then, Desplechin has been a regular Palme contender, screening 1992's *La Sentinelle*, 1996's *My Sex Life...*, 2000's *Esther Kahn*, and 2008's *A Christmas Tale* in Competition. 2003 saw Desplechin's debut in *Un Certain Regard* with *In the Company of Men*.

Though not at the helm, Desplechin's commentary appeared in 2010 Ingmar Bergman documentary *But Film Is My Mistress*, which screened in the Cannes Classics program that year.



Could it win the Palme? Make no mistake: *Jimmy P.* is one of the titles to beat this year, as Amalric and Oscar-winning del Toro should make for an unstoppable combination. Amalric, consistently a Croisette regular, won the Festival's Best Director prize for 2010's *On Tour*. Meanwhile, del Toro won Cannes' Best Actor prize in 2008 for Steven Soderbergh's *Che*, which means he's taken home acting prizes from the two biggest names in the business. In other words, we know the acting quotient of Desplechin's latest is top-notch, and his players fit an equal blend of French and American (remember how the jury president of this French institution is American?). *Jimmy P.* marks Desplechin's fifth shot at gold. Does the "P" in *Jimmy P.* stand for "Palme"?

Why you should care: With the talent behind this picture (not to mention the Howard Shore-composed score), it's hard to not expect big things. Mathieu Amalric is Desplechin's favorite actor, and the rapport continues to be something to look forward to. With films like *The Master* paving a path before it, *Jimmy P.* looks to be an intellectual two-hander led by some masterful performers—so, whether or not Desplechin wins big at Cannes this year, all signs are pointing to further awards (read: Oscar) buzz.



HIROKAZU KORE-EDA **SOSHITE CHICHI NI NARU (LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON)**

Background: Japanese; born Tokyo, Japan, 1962.

Known for / style: *Nobody Knows* (2004), *Still Walking* (2008), *I Wish* (2011); directing television and documentaries in addition to narrative features; contemplative looks at mortality, loss, and memory; blurring the lines between fiction and nonfiction; incorporating autobiographical elements into his stories.



Notable accolades: On the festival circuit, Koreeda has won the Grand Prix at the Ghent International Film Festival (*Nobody Knows*), Best Screenplay at San Sebastián (*I Wish*), and Venice's Golden Osella for Best Director (1995's *Maborosi*). *Maborosi* also won Best Film at the Chicago International Film Festival. At the 2009 Asian Film Awards, he took home the award for Best Director (*Still Walking*, 2008). In his native Japan, Kore-eda is the owner of three Blue Ribbon Awards (Best Director and Best Film for *Nobody Knows*; Best Director for *Still Walking*).

Previous Cannes appearances: Koreeda has had three films at Cannes: two in Competition (2001's *Distance*; 2004's *Nobody Knows*) and one in Un Certain Regard (2009's *Air Doll*). In 2004, Yūya Yagira's performance in *Nobody Knows* took the prize for Best Actor.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Like Father, Like Son*, a Japanese-language drama starring Masaharu Fukuyama, Machiko Ono, Lily Franky (*All Around Us*, 2008), and Yōko Maki (*The Grudge*, 2004). When a father learns his biological son was swapped with a different boy at birth, he must make the difficult choice between his actual son and the boy he sired.

Could it win the Palme? Sight unseen, *Like Father, Like Son* could take the cake for saddest entry at the Festival, and if that's the case—and the film is powerful enough to affect the jury—Kore-eda could be in for his first major European festival win, whether it's a Jury Prize or a Best Director gong. Japan is no stranger to the award; the country having won four times prior (the legendary Shohei Imamura responsible for two). With Japanese compatriot Naomi Kawase on the jury, Kore-eda should stand favorable ground against his fellow Palme contenders. Then again, a single vote is a single vote. Kore-eda's odds to win the top prize seem difficult, but given Nanni Moretti's Palme-winning *The Son's Room* (2001), we know the topic of father-son relationships is a golden one.

Why you should care: A favorite in auteur circles, Koreeda continues to impress (and depress) with his themes of loss and death. Whether or not he can secure a stronger holding stateside remains to be seen, but a Cannes award would help considerably. It's also nice to have a Japanese film that actually has a shot at a Palme d'Or, as Takashi Miike's genre Competition entry *Wara no Tate* (with middling reviews out of Japan) seems hopeless in that regard. Either way, with his demotion to Un Certain Regard with *Air Doll* in 2009, Kore-eda's bottom line victory is his return to the prestigious main event, perhaps signaling the greatness of *Like Father, Like Son*.



ALEX VAN WARMERDAM **BORGMAN**



Background: Dutch; born in North Holland, Netherlands, 1952.

Known for / style: *Abel* (1986), *The Northerners* (1992), *Little Tony* (1998); black comedies, acting in his own films, casting his wife (Dutch actress Annet Malherbe), working in theater and fine art.

Notable accolades: The majority of van Warmerdam's trophy wins originate from the Nederlands Film Festival, which understandably treats the local with higher regard. But van Warmerdam has done okay outside his home country, winning Best Young Film at the 1992 European Film Awards for *The Northerners*. On the prestige circuit, Venice awarded van Warmerdam a FIPRESCI prize for 1996's *De jurk*, and the Europa Cinemas Label for 2009's *The Last Days of Emma Blank*.

Previous Cannes appearances: Van Warmerdam's only Cannes debut is *Little Tony*, which played *Un Certain Regard* in 1998.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Borgman*, a thriller following the title character who may be the Devil incarnate. He joins a neighborhood and disturbs the status quo. Jan Bijvoet stars as Borgman, with van Warmerdam and his wife tagging along in supporting roles.

Could it win the Palme? First things first: the trailer for *Borgman* looks absolutely smashing, the kind of film that comes out of nowhere and surprises even the most prepared of festivalgoers. While the cast of *Borgman* is more or less unknown (save for van Warmerdam and his wife Annet), it shouldn't matter if the film delivers on what the mysterious teaser promises. Besides, as mentioned above, van Warmerdam's *The Last Days of Emma Blank* won the Europa Cinemas Label, an award given to gems unearthed in a "discovery" program. It's easy to envision a similar situation when *Borgman* unspools—it won't be much of a personal discovery, given the international attention all Competition films receive, but if there's a festival notorious for dark horse wins, it's Cannes.

Why you should care: There hasn't been a Dutch film selected for the Competition since 1975. That means in just under a month, van Warmerdam's little film will have defeated a four-decade-long dry spell since Jos Stelling's *Mariken van Nieumeghen* at the 28th Cannes Film Festival (we're on the cusp of the 66th, folks). There's something to this *Borgman* business that's got festival director Thierry Frémaux eager to program the film, and it's high time we find out why.



ETHAN COEN, JOEL COEN **INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS**

Background: American; born St. Louis Park, Minnesota, 1954 (Joel) and 1957 (Ethan).

Known for / style: *Miller's Crossing*, *Barton Fink*, *Fargo*, *The Big Lebowski*, *No Country for Old Men*; dark and dry humor, crime narratives and kidnapping plots, genre hybrids, working with a repertory including Steve Buscemi, John Turturro, Frances McDormand, John Goodman, George Clooney, Jon Polito.

Notable accolades: Over the past three decades, the Coens have achieved a number of awards from the highest honors in the industry, having won both the Oscar for Best Picture (2007's *No Country for Old Men*) and the Cannes Palme d'Or (1991's *Barton Fink*). In a combined total, the pair own over 150 titles (including four Oscars apiece). At Cannes, Joel has won three Best Director awards (1991's *Barton Fink*, 2001's *The Man Who Wasn't There*, and 1996's *Fargo*).

Film they're bringing to Cannes: *Inside Llewyn Davis*, based loosely on Dave Van Ronk memoir "The Mayor of MacDougal Street." Cast includes John Goodman, Justin Timberlake, Garrett Hedlund, Oscar Isaac, and Carey Mulligan. The story dramatizes the 1960s New York City folk scene, following the life and times of fictional singer Llewyn Davis.

Previous Cannes appearances: Les frères Coen have been coming to Cannes since 1987's *Out of Competition* picture *Raising Arizona*. In Competition, *Barton Fink*, 1994's *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *Fargo*, 2000's *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, *The Man Who Wasn't There*, 2004's *The Ladykillers*, and *No Country for Old Men* have pitched for the Palme. In the sidebars, the Coens have participated in two anthology films, 2006's *Paris, je t'aime*, *Un Certain Regard* and 2007's *To Each His Own Cinema*, *Out of Competition*.

Could it win the Palme? Aside from the Coens, only Roman Polanski and Steven Soderbergh are fellow Palme d'Or winners

in in the 2013 Competition. That isn't to say that laureates receive special treatment, but it could mean their newest films are held to a higher standard by the jury, whether subconsciously or otherwise. But *Inside Llewyn Davis* is one of the biggest titles in the Competition and its pedigree definitely prevents it from falling between the memory cracks. If it's better than the average Co-Bro joint, it could very well be in the running for any of the Festival's prizes (perhaps a fourth Best Director title for Joel, the first for now-credited co-director Ethan?). Furthermore, as last year proved for the seventh time, multiple Palme wins can happen. It all depends if the film registers with Steven Spielberg and his jury—and given the plot, *Inside Llewyn Davis* could trigger some serious 1960s nostalgia by members of a generation that likely remembers that decade.



Why you should care: Unlike Polanski and Soderbergh, the Coens' *Barton Fink* Palme win was unanimous—the difference between A+ and A++, as it were. *Inside Llewyn Davis'* cast is strong and well-known, as is the music (Mumford and Sons lead Marcus Mumford co-produced the soundtrack). Also interesting is the story behind Dave Van Ronk, the inspiration behind the film: folk legend Bob Dylan reportedly looked up to Van Ronk, with rumours suggesting Dylan had aggressively "borrowed" material from him. While that was a grandiose claim several years ago, Dylan's recent alleged plagiarism shocker has made it easier to believe certain theories. Regardless, the 1960s New York City folk scene should prove a photogenic setting—and with two titans behind the helm, the answer, my friend, will be more than blowing in the wind.



MONDAY MAY 20TH

TAKASHI MIIKE **WARA NO TATE (SHIELD OF STRAW)**

Background: Japanese; born Yao, Osaka, Japan, 1960.

Known for / style: *13 Assassins* (2010), *Ichi the Killer* (2001), *Audition* (1999); an eclectic promiscuity of genre play, including martial arts extravaganzas, family-friendly films, and crime dramas; excessive, cartoonish violence and sexual themes; releasing some titles directly-to-video.

Notable accolades: In his home country, the Japanese Professional Movie Awards have been kind to Miike, handing him five Best Director wins (1997's *Rainy Dog* and *Young Thugs: Innocent Blood*, 2000's *The Guys from Paradise*, 2001's *Visitor Q* and *Ichi the Killer*), a Best Film nod (*Ichi the Killer*), and finally the title of Movie King of the 1990s in 2001. Outside of Japan, Miike snagged both a FIPRESCI prize and the KNF Award for *Audition* (the KNF Award, oddly, is given to "the best feature film that has yet to find distribution within the Netherlands"). In 2010, Venice gave a Future Film Festival Digital Award (Special Mention) to Miike's *13 Assassins*.



Previous Cannes appearances: Miike has played the Croisette twice: once in Competition (2011's *3D Hara-Kiri: Death of a Samurai*) and once out of Competition (*For Love's Sake*, 2012). *Hara-Kiri* was the first 3D film ever to screen in Competition.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Wara no Tate (Shield of Straw)*, a police thriller based on Kazuhiro Kiuchi's best-selling novel of the same name. Takao Osawa (from Japanese TV show *Jin*) and Nanako Matsushima (*I am Mita, Your Housekeeper*) star as two cops tasked with escorting a convicted killer across Japan. Getting in the way are ruthless bounty hunters, eager to cash in on the head of the killer (played by Tatsuya Fujiwara, *Death Note*).

Could it win the Palme? While no director is truly exempt from winning the Palme d'Or, it would appear Miike's latest thriller has the Japanese equivalent of "zilch" at taking home the prize. Cannes is not exactly known for awarding by-the-numbers action movies (2011's Best Director-winning *Drive* resists genre conformity), and



the film is already out in Japan—the latter point hurting Miike's chances in the long run. The film may not be Miike's best work: *Time Out Tokyo* gave the film two stars (out of five) on April 18, writing: *Wara no Tate* is "slick, empty, and rather dim." If a local critic can't get down with Miike's latest, it ain't looking good for the rest of us. *The Japan Times* review of the film is slightly sunnier (giving Miike three out of five stars), but that's still less than stellar. If Miike has a friend on the jury, it's director Naomi Kawase—a Japanese compatriot who may have a hell of a time convincing her fellow members that *Wara no Tate* is worth its weight in gold. Given her influences, though, that seems highly unlikely.

Why you should care: Miike releases so many films that it's hard to get overly excited for a reportedly lesser entry. Still, Miike has produced at least one masterpiece in his prolific career (*13 Assassins* tops out at 96% on Rotten Tomatoes). Either way, with an explosive trailer and a strong cast, genre fans can look forward to a fun blitz through urban Japan. *Wara no Tate* could be just a good ol' time at the movies, not the arthouse favorite that the Competition would ordinarily prize. And there's nothing wrong with that.



VALERIA BRUNI-TEDESCHI UN CHÂTEAU EN ITALIE



Background: Italian-French; born Turin, Italy, 1964. Bruni-Tedeschi is the older sister of Carla Bruni, *chanteuse* and France's previous first lady.

Known for / style: Acting in Steven Spielberg's *Munich* (2005) and François Ozon's *5×2* (2004); directing *It's Easier for a Camel...* (2003) and *Actrices* (2007); weaving autobiographical elements into her narratives; working in television, cinema, and theater; casting herself in her films.

Notable accolades: While the majority of Bruni-Tedeschi's awards are for her career as an actor, her directing filmography is not without merit: in 2003, she won the Louis Delluc prize for Best First Film (*It's Easier for a Camel...*), a prize given by a panel of experts and headed by Cannes president Gilles Jacob; in 2007, the director won a Special Jury Prize at Cannes for her Un Certain Regard debut *Actrices*. For her acting, Bruni-Tedeschi holds both a César (Most

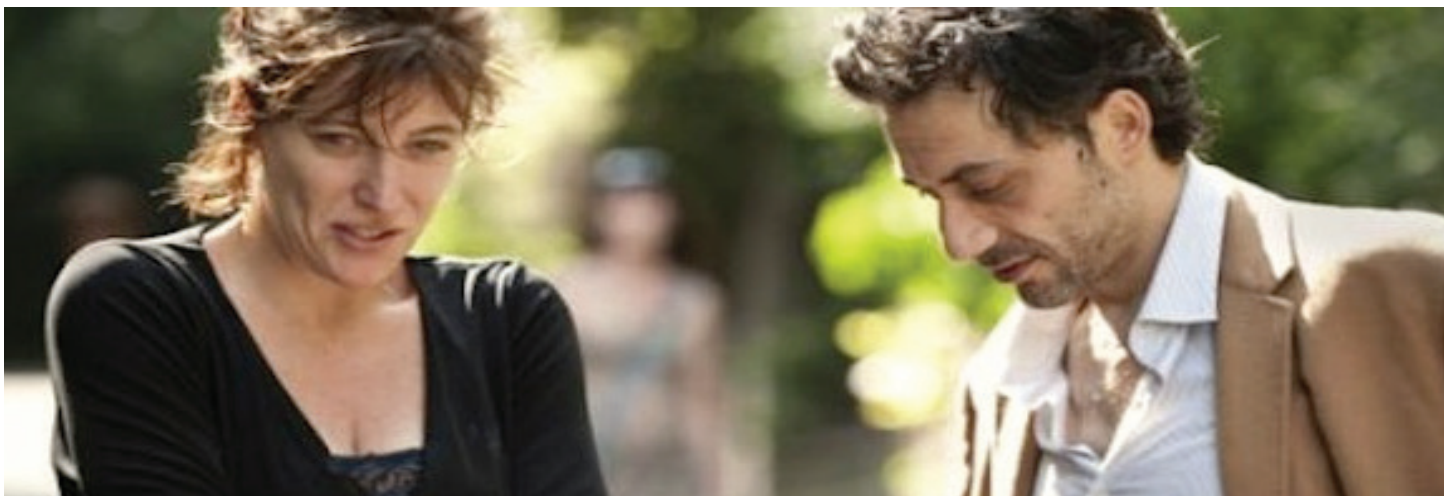
Promising Actress, 1993's *Normal People Are Nothing Exceptional*) and two Pasinetti Awards for Best Actress (5×2 and 1999's *Empty Days*).

Previous Cannes appearances: As a director, Bruni-Tedeschi has debuted only one film at Cannes: *Actrices*, which played in the 2007 Un Certain Regard program. As an actress, however, she has walked the Croisette seven times: 1996's *La Seconda Volta* (Competition), 1997's *The House* (Un Certain Regard), 1998's *Those Who Love Me Can Take The Train* (Competition), 1999's *Empty Days* and *La Balia* (both Competition), 2005's *Time to Leave* (Un Certain Regard), and *Actrices*.

Film she's bringing to Cannes: *Un Château en Italie* (*A Castle in Italy*), a French-language dramatic comedy starring Bruni-Tedeschi, Louis Garrel (2003's *The Dreamers* and Bruni-Tedeschi's romantic partner), Filippo Timi (*The American*), and Xavier Beauvois (director of 2010 Cannes Grand Prix-winning *Of Gods and Men*). IMDb believes the film is about "a family forced to sell their Italian home"; other details hint at a sick brother, a family falling apart, and a romance between Louise (Bruni-Tedeschi) and Nathan (Garrel).

Could it win the Palme? From a gender perspective, Bruni-Tedeschi is the only female director in a Competition of twenty pictures; a fact that will remain, for better or for worse, at the back of everyone's minds throughout the Festival. Fortunately for Bruni-Tedeschi, with Lynne Ramsay, Nicole Kidman, Naomi Kawase, and Vidya Balan on the Palme d'Or jury, the quartet may turn *Gang Of Four* and back a fellow femme. Bruni-Tedeschi's potential allegiances look strong, and if her picture is excellent—which it may very well be—the case for a second female Palme-winner is compelling, especially in the presence of Palme laureate Jane Campion (who is set to adjudicate the 2013 Short Film program).

Why you should care: Casting herself and her real-life partner as the film's central romance, Bruni-Tedeschi has set things up to involve a believable and natural connection, which may translate well on-screen. And while it's a shame for a number of reasons that *Un Château en Italie* will be known as the "female film" in Competition, the reputations of everyone involved give promise that the film will earn more deserving labels.



STEVEN SODERBERGH **BEHIND THE CANDELABRA**

Background: American; born Atlanta, Georgia, 1963.

Known for / styles: *sex, lies, and videotape* (1989), *Traffic* (2000), *Ocean's Eleven* (2001); blending an arthouse career with Hollywood commercialism; working with a repertory company that includes actors Matt Damon, George Clooney, Julia Roberts and Channing Tatum; spanning a wide variety of genres and themes; shooting and editing his own pictures.

Notable accolades: Alongside formidable box office successes (*Ocean's Eleven* was the fifth highest-grossing film of 2001), an Oscar for Best Director (*Traffic*, 2000) sits on Soderbergh's mantel. Beside it is a Palme d'Or (*sex, lies, and videotape*), which also won a FIPRESCI prize that year. Outside of these institutions, though, *Traffic* remains Soderbergh's biggest awards player, winning Best Director titles from a large group of North American awards circles.

Previous Cannes appearances: Soderbergh has a special relationship with Cannes: winning the Palme d'Or at age 26 for his 1989 debut *sex, lies, and videotape*, Soderbergh launched his burgeoning filmmaking career by becoming one of the youngest directors ever to win the award (Louis Malle, of 1956 Palme *The Silent World*, was 24 when he shared the win with Jacques-Yves Cousteau). Since his Palme, Soderbergh has played in Competition twice more: once in 1993 for *King of the Hill*, the other in 2008 for *Che*. 2007's *Ocean's Thirteen* and 1999's *The Limey* both played out of Competition (the latter programming reportedly something Soderbergh was unhappy with). In 2003, Soderbergh was a Jury Member.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Behind the Candelabra*, a film for HBO based on the affair between Liberace and Scott Thorson.

Joining Soderbergh for the seventh time is Matt Damon (Thorson), while Michael Douglas plays Liberace (marking the third time he has worked with the director). Dan Aykroyd, Debbie Reynolds, and Rob Lowe turn supporting roles.

Could it win the Palme? In case you hadn't heard, Soderbergh says, repeatedly, he's retiring—and while many industry professionals believe these are simply idle threats (think Frank Sinatra's recurring change of heart), if Soderbergh did finally hang up his many hats for good, it would be poetic for Cannes to open and close a director's filmography with golden laurels. At the same time, we know that Soderbergh was hesitant on joining the Competition, but eventually persuaded by Festival director Thierry Frémaux. So now we're curious: why wasn't Soderbergh immediately interested? Well, perhaps Soderbergh didn't want the pressure of going out on a high note; perhaps he is now chastened by the horse race of the Competition. Or, more simply, perhaps he feels it just isn't his best work. The only thing we truly know is the trailer and the release date of **Behind the Candelabra**, which premieres on HBO May 26—the day after Cannes 2013 ends. With such an immediate post-Fest release, it's clear that HBO doesn't intend for *Candelabra* to ride a wave of press and success that Palme winners typically enjoy in the weeks following the festival. If Soderbergh wins, though, it'll be his victory (and HBO's dumb luck).

Why you should care: On April 27th, Soderbergh delivered a fascinating State of Cinema keynote speech at the San Francisco International Film Festival. To say the least, it was an emotional confessional of unsettling truths and candid remarks about "what's killing cinema." You should watch the entire address, especially if you've ever wondered about what giant blockbusters and endless sequels are doing to the medium. Either way, with Steven Spielberg as the head of the jury, it'll be interesting to see if these remarks about the dark side of Hollywood mean anything once the Festival kicks off.



PAOLO SORRENTINO **LA GRANDE BELLEZZA (THE GREAT BEAUTY)**



Background: Italian; born Naples, Italy, 1970.

Known for / styles: *Il Divo* (2008), *This Must Be The Place* (2011), *The Consequences of Love* (2004); directing documentaries and narrative fiction, writing novels (*Everybody's Right*, 2011), working with actor Toni Servillo and cinematographer Luca Bigazzi. Sorrentino and compatriot Matteo Garrone are sometimes credited for a revival in contemporary Italian cinema

Notable accolades: Sorrentino has won two prizes at Cannes, including the Jury Prize for *Il Divo* and the Ecumenical Jury Prize for Sean Penn drama *This Must Be The Place*. The Ecumenical Jury prize is given to "works of artistic quality [that] reveal the mysterious depths of human beings... their hurts and failings as well as their

hopes." Outside of the Croisette, Sorrentino is also the owner of four David di Donatello figurines: three for *The Consequences of Love* (Best Film, Best Director, and Best Screenplay) and one for *This Must Be The Place* (Best Screenplay). *Il Divo* was nominated for a Best Make-up Oscar at the 82nd Academy Awards.

Previous Cannes appearances: Sorrentino has had three films in Competition: 2004's *The Consequences of Love*, 2008's Jury Prize-winning *Il Divo*, and 2011's *This Must Be The Place*. In 2009, Sorrentino was named Jury President of the Un Certain Regard program.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *La Grande Bellezza (The Great Beauty)*, which follows "an aging writer who bitterly recalls his passionate, lost youth." The leading cast includes Toni Servillo (marking the fifth time the actor has worked with Sorrentino) and Sabrina Ferilli. Capturing *The Great Beauty* is Sorrentino's favorite cinematographer, Vulcain Prize-winner Luca Bigazzi.

Could it win the Palme? It's a tough call. Parts of the online clips for *The Great Beauty* look and sound like 2011 Palme winner *The Tree of Life*, with operatic music, poetic narration, and sweeping photography underlining the majesties of life. Even the narrative sounds familiar (Sean Penn spends much of *The Tree of Life* reflecting on the past). If *The Great Beauty's* final product is as similar to *The Tree of Life* as it seems on paper, jury members may feel Sorrentino is trying to revisit someone else's successful formula. If this early speculation is horribly off base, however, there's still reason for Sorrentino to be hopeful in 2013—especially if we see a return to his own form. He came close to winning before.

Why you should care: *The Great Beauty* sees Sorrentino back where he's most comfortable: shooting in Italy with Italian dialogue. *This Must Be The Place* was an interesting English-language experiment, but the reception was mixed. It disappointed many who were eager to see new work from the man who made *Il Divo*. Sorrentino's latest film looks strong—and with Matteo Garrone's *Reality* behind it, Italian cinema can only get that much stronger when *Grande Bellezza* debuts locally May 21st.



NICOLAS WINDING REFN **ONLY GOD FORGIVES**



Previous Cannes appearances: *Drive* is Winding Refn's only film to play the Festival. In terms of Festival prizes, the *Dane* is one for one. This leads us to his second Competition entry:

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Only God Forgives*, a Thai-French-Danish co-production that follows a Muay Thai boxing-club manager, Julian (Ryan Gosling), who seeks vengeance for the recent death of his brother. Kristen Scott Thomas plays Jenna, Julian's "Mafia godmother," while Vithaya Pansringarm plays Chang, the "Angel of Vengeance." Hyper-violence is to be expected.

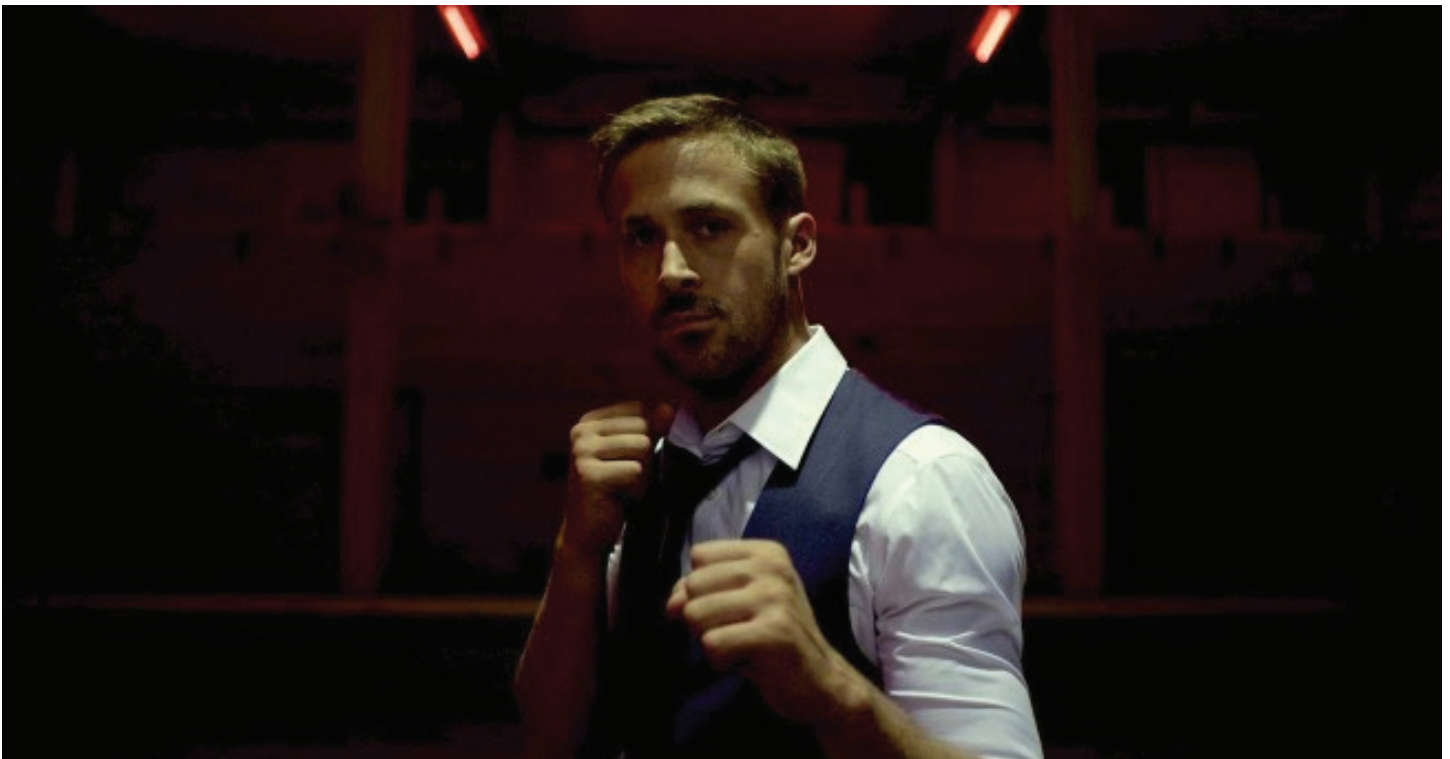
Could it win the Palme? According to Ryan Gosling, *Only God Forgives* is "the strangest thing [he's] ever read"—which actually spells good things for the film's Palme pitch. While action movies don't typically play well in Competition, *Only God Forgives* promises to be something especially artful: with the release of some red band trailers, we know that the film looks stylistically and aesthetically slick; almost like the spiritual sequel of *Drive*. When *Drive* premiered back in 2011 after a solid week of dramas, the sudden surge of energy enlivened the Croisette and left an unforgettable impression on audiences. It rode a wave. If *Only God Forgives'* Muay Thai gong-show is similarly great (and the timing is just right), an award-winning ass-kicking could prevail in the very near future.

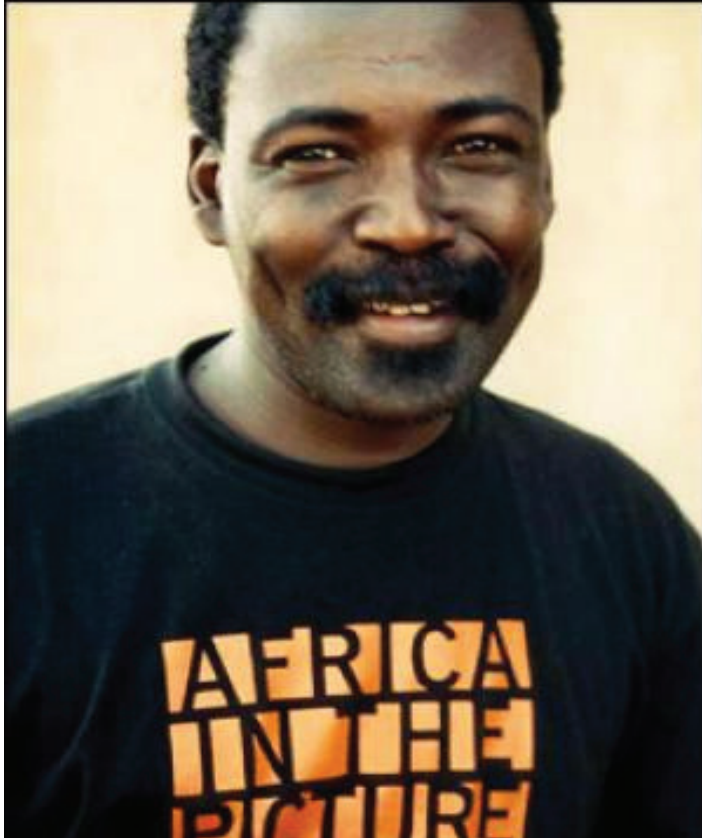
Why you should care: As if to taunt the rest of the Competition, Winding Refn's trailer ends with Julian muttering: "Wanna fight?" Regardless of who wins the Palme d'Or, though, the stage is set for *Only God Forgives* to be an excellent showdown of arthouse action. Oh, and *Drive's* head-bobbing soundtrack? Composer Cliff Martinez is back for another mix, so the needle-drops and bass lines should be on point. It's time to get pumped... again.

Background: Danish; born Copenhagen, Denmark, 1970.

Known for / styles: *The Pusher* trilogy (1996, 2004, 2005), *Bronson* (2008), *Valhalla Rising* (2009), *Drive* (2011); working with Mads Mikkelsen, stylized violence, shooting chronologically, heavily contrasted palettes (due to claimed color blindness).

Notable accolades: When it comes to awards, *Drive* is Winding Refn's most successful film, starting with the Best Director win at Cannes. The film also landed him a BAFTA nomination in the same category, and he continued to rack up directing prizes from critic circles and film festivals. In 2008, *Bronson* won Best Film at the Sydney Film Festival.



MAHAMAT-SALEH HAROUN **GRIGRIS**

Background: Chadian; born N'Djamena, Chad, 1961.

Known for / style: *Bye Bye Africa* (1999), *Our Father* (2002), *Dry Season* (2006), *A Screaming Man* (2010); directing shorts and documentaries in addition to narrative features; casting non-actors; sensitive portrayals of childhood and maturation; setting and shooting his films in his home country.

Notable accolades: Haroun has done well for himself in the European prestige circuit, winning the Cannes Jury Prize in 2010 (*A Screaming Man*) as well as a number of awards at Venice (*Dry Season* won the UNESCO award, a Special Jury Prize, an ELUC award, and two honorable mentions in 2006; *Bye Bye Africa* won the title of Best First Film and a Luigi De Laurentiis Special Mention in 1999). In 2010, Haroun won both Venice's Robert Bresson Award and São Paulo's Humanity Prize.

Previous Cannes appearances: In 2002, *Our Father* played in the Director's Fortnight down the street from the Competition. In 2010, however, Haroun's *A Screaming Man* was pitted against his fellow Palme contenders, taking home the Jury Prize.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Grigris*, a French- and Arabic-language drama following the eponymous character who aspires to be a professional dancer, despite a paralyzed leg. When his uncle is

struck with a grave illness, Grigris accepts work from petrol traffickers to save him. The film features newcomers Anaïs Monory and Souleymane Démé, with known actors Cyril Gueï (*Hitman*), Marius Yelolo (*Early Rising France*), Fatimé Hadje (*Dry Season*) and Haroun favorite Youssef Djaoro (*A Screaming Man*, *Dry Season*).

Could it win the Palme? Though the 2013 Competition is an international event, Haroun is Africa's only representative. And given Chad's recent cultural renaissance—with the cinema being one of the ways locals have reclaimed their identity—a Cannes jury could feel good about giving Haroun an even bigger break than his 2010 jury prize, whether it's the Grand Prix, Best Director, or the Palme itself. The prize can get political, as it were, and some juries don't favor the Palme d'Or being simply a pat on the back for established auteurs. We already know that Spielberg is conscious of travesties in modern-day Africa, given his withdrawal as artistic advisor for the 2008 Beijing Olympics (Chinese president Hu Jintao failed to respond to Spielberg's calls for Chinese aid in war-torn Darfur, a horrific conflict that leaked into Haroun's home country of Chad in 2003). Without these external issues, however, Haroun's *Grigris* could otherwise be an excellent film worthy of a prestigious film award—nothing more, nothing less.

Why you should care: is the champion of Chad's cinema, supporting an arts scene in the face of violent unrest. But things have relatively stabilized in Chad following a brutal civil war, and with the success of *A Screaming Man* (and the reknown a Cannes jury prize bestows), the director has said a world-class film school is set to open there. "My award at Cannes has had an incredible effect," said Haroun in an interview with the Africa Channel. "It has propelled the status and importance of cinema in Chad. Even to a political level, I'd say."



ALEXANDER PAYNE **NEBRASKA***Image by Ray Pride*

Background: American; born Omaha, Nebraska, 1961.

Known for / styles: *Election* (1999), *About Schmidt* (2002), *Sideways* (2004), *The Descendants* (2011); shooting and setting narratives in Omaha; adultery narratives and satirical, dark humor; films that revolve around a lonely protagonist.

Notable accolades: The majority of Payne's awards are for his adapted screenplays. At the top of the list, Payne is the recipient of two Academy Awards for Best Adapted Screenplay (*The Descendants*, based on the Kauai Hart Hemmings novel of the same name; *Sideways*, adapted from the Rex Pickett novel of the same name), with a BAFTA equivalent in 2004 for good measure (*Sideways*). In lieu of a Best Picture Oscar, *The Descendants* was AFI's Movie of the Year in 2011.

Previous Cannes appearances: Payne has played in Competition only once (2002's *About Schmidt*), but the Festival has enjoyed his company in other ways: in 2005, he was the President of the Un Certain Regard jury, while in 2006, Payne participated in anthology film *Paris, je t'aime* (Un Certain Regard). Last year, Payne sat on Nanni Moretti's Competition jury.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Nebraska*, a black-and-white dramedy starring Bruce Dern and Will Forte on a father-son road trip. When Woody (Dern) thinks he's won a lucrative Publisher's Clearing House prize, he travels to Nebraska with his son David (Forte) to claim the prize. Bob Odenkirk shows up for a supporting role.

Could it win the Palme? Payne was in the running for a Best Picture Oscar at the 84th Academy Awards with *The Descendants*, but lost to *The Artist*, which coincidentally premiered at Cannes. But that's okay, as Payne can rest assured in knowing the jury has likely seen the majority of his filmography, as it is both beloved and well-known. (And hey, with Reese Witherspoon's recent arrest making news, *Election* should be at the back of everyone's minds). All things considered, Payne has very strong odds: *Nebraska* sees him returning to his home state to shoot, and it seems unwise to bet against a world-class director working where he feels most comfortable, given how culturally significant *Election* and *About Schmidt* have become (both films were set in Omaha).

Why you should care: With *Nebraska*, Alexander Payne is both staying safe and branching out: shooting in his home state should mean the story is steeped in personal authority, but the director's decision to film in black-and-white is a new look for Payne. If his second shot at a Palme d'Or doesn't pan out, though, expect him (and *Nebraska*) to be a heavily-tipped awards contender come December, like every one of his films since *Election*.



ABDELLATIF KECHICHE **LA VIE D'ADELE (BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR)**



Background: Tunisian; born Tunis, Tunisia 1960. Kechiche's first name is sometimes shortened to simply "Abdel."

Known for / style: Directing *Games of Love and Chance* (2003), *The Secret of the Grain* (2007), *Black Venus* (2010); acting as the taxi driver in *Sorry, Haters* (2005); bulky narratives that stretch over two hours; casting non-actors; themes of youth and love; adhering to Ozu-esque realism.

Notable accolades: The majority of Kechiche's awards come from French institutions like the Étoiles d'Or and the Césars (Kechiche's *The Secret of the Grain* won Best Director, Best Film and Best Original Screenplay at both ceremonies). Above that is Kechiche's prestigious Louis Delluc Prize for *The Secret of the Grain*. Outside of France at the Venice Film Festival, Kechiche is a known quantity: the director won a FIPRESCI prize, a Special Jury Prize, and the Young Cinema Award for *The Secret of the Grain*, while his *Blame It on Voltaire* won the Luigi De Laurentiis award in 2000. Also at Venice was Kechiche's *Black Venus*, which won the Equal Opportunity Award in 2010.

Previous Cannes appearances: A son of the Lido and not of the Croisette, Kechiche has yet to debut a film at Cannes. But given his

success with French critical societies outside of Cannes, Kechiche's reputation is strong enough to bump him straight to the Palme race.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *La vie d'Adèle (Blue is the Warmest Color)*, a French-language drama based on the Julie Maroh graphic novel of the same name. The film stars Adele Exarchopoulos (*The Round-Up*), Léa Seydoux (*Mission: Impossible-Ghost Protocol*), Catherine Salée (*Private Property*), Aurélien Recoing (*13 Tzameti*) and newcomers Jeremie Laheurte and Sandor Funtek. At 179 minutes, Kechiche takes the perhaps-dubious honor of having the longest film in Competition; a bulky three-hour journey following 15-year-old Adèle (*Exarchopoulos*) as she rediscovers her sexual orientation. Seydoux plays the desirable Emma, Adèle's new love interest, while Salée and Recoing play Adèle's parents.

Could it win the Palme? It feels appropriate to compare *La vie d'Adèle* to Xavier Dolan's 2012 *Un Certain Regard* picture *Laurence Anyways*, a similarly-themed LGBT drama that was an hour longer than most other films in the program—which, coincidentally, was one of Dolan's biggest criticisms. Either way, whatever Kechiche has headed to the Festival is sure to be filled with erotic reveries and passionate romances, a truth that will undoubtedly help keep audiences awake. If the film is a narrative stretch, though, the topic looks to require some extensively brave performances, so something like an acting prize for the romantic leads sounds more likely than an outright Palme win (especially if the result is something that could have perhaps used a longer session in the editing bay).

Why you should care: Julie Maroh's original graphic novel has won prestigious awards in the graphic novel community, and Kechiche's steady camera is a worthy candidate to capture the provocative action. Meanwhile, Seydoux's Chopard Trophy in 2009 is evidence that she has the chops to carry such a hefty picture. There's reason for optimism here.



JAMES GRAY **THE IMMIGRANT**



Image by Ray Pride

Background: American; born New York City 1969.

Known for / style: *Little Odessa* (1994), *The Yards* (2000), *We Own the Night* (2007), *Two Lovers* (2008); taking hiatuses between films; adhering to "middle-budget" filmmaking (as opposed to low-budget experiments and high-budget extravaganzas); keeping "story-telling" his number one priority; themes of solitude, violence, and opposition; working with Joaquin Phoenix.

Notable accolades: Gray's only major award is a Venice Silver Lion, given for *Little Odessa* in 1994. At the Independent Spirit Awards, Gray has been nominated three times: twice for *Little Odessa* (Best First Feature, Best First Screenplay) and once for *Two Lovers* (Best Director). Gray has also been nominated for two Best Foreign Film Césars (*Two Lovers* and *We Own the Night*).

Previous Cannes appearances: Following his award-winning Venice debut with *Little Odessa*, Cannes jumped at the chance to

program Gray in Competition, having done so a total of three times: once in 2000 (*The Yards*), once in 2007 (*We Own the Night*), and once in 2008 (*Two Lovers*). Gray is also the screenwriter of *Blood Ties*, the *Guillaume Canet* thriller set to play out of Competition this year (which also stars Marion Cotillard, set to play in *The Immigrant*). In 2009, Gray was a member of the Competition jury.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *The Immigrant* (produced under the title *Lowlife*), a historical drama set in early 1920s New York. When Polish immigrant Ewa (Marion Cotillard) falls in the hands of Bruno (Joaquin Phoenix), the two-faced brute forces her to become a prostitute. However, after meeting Orlando (Jeremy Renner), Bruno's cousin and a suave magician, Eva realizes that only he can help her escape the trap she has fallen into.

Could it win the Palme? Gray's relationship with the festival is an interesting one, having debuted each of his films since *Little Odessa* in Competition yet leaving empty-handed every time. That has to end eventually, right? Maybe, but, there's no overwhelming reason to suggest that 2013 is finally Gray's year. That said, *The Immigrant* could very well hit a home run: the acting talent is full-on awards-bait, with AMPAS favorites Marion Cotillard, Joaquin Phoenix and Jeremy Renner in the cast. The film is also a period piece, which should play nicely with Steven Spielberg. The hope here is that *The Immigrant* is a career best for Gray, but his stellar players may distract jury members' attention otherwise (with Paul Thomas Anderson's *The Master* still in recent memory, tipping Joaquin Phoenix's performance as an early awards frontrunner is an easy call; likewise for *Rust and Bone's* Cotillard).

Why you should care: When the casting was announced, *The Immigrant* immediately became a film to watch on awards sonars. If the film leaves the Festival without any golden recognition, that's okay: it's not simply game over, as distributor Harvey Weinstein will assuredly make certain *The Immigrant* stays relevant come awards season.



ARNAUD DES PALLIÈRES **MICHAEL KOHLHAAS**

Background: French; born Paris, France, 1961.

Known for / styles: *Farewell* (2003), *Parc* (2008); TV documentaries and historical narratives; adapting texts into features.

Notable accolades: Given that des Pallières' IMDb 'STARmeter' has never been higher (higher than when his films have actually released, ironically), it's all right if you're blanking on who this French director is. He's spent little time on the festival circuit, with *Parc* his only real shot at a European prize (Stockholm's Bronze Horse). It didn't win. No matter: given that his television and documentary work comprises nearly half of his filmmaking career, it's no wonder audiences haven't heard of him.

Previous Cannes appearances: Nonexistent—des Pallières' Cannes debut jumps him straight to the Competition, skipping typical stepping zones (Director's Fortnight, Critic's Week, and Un Certain Regard).

Film he's bringing to Cannes: Michael Kohlhaas, a historical war drama based on the 1811 Heinrich von Kleist novella of the same name. Mads Mikkelsen plays the title role, while Mélusine Mayance (*Sarah's Key*), Bruno Ganz (*Downfall* and Eric Rohmer's Kleist adaptation, *The Marquise Of O...*), and Denis Lavant (*Holy Motors*) show up to support. When corruption strikes, Kohlhaas gathers an army to fight for their rights. (Earlier adaptations of the text include a 1969 entry by Volker Schlöndorff.)

Could it win the Palme? It's interesting to see a relatively unknown filmmaker make Thierry Frémaux's Competition cut, because it speaks to a certain *je ne sais quoi* about the picture. Does that mean it's an incredible film? Maybe, but not necessarily—Michael Kohlhaas does feature Cannes 2012 Best Actor Mads Mikkelsen, after all. So, des Pallières' Croisette walk may have been fated the minute Mikkelsen signed on. On the other hand, no other festival enjoys "finding" directors as much as Cannes does—meaning if des Pallières wins his first major prize, the programmers will be able to take ample credit down the line. And might this war drama play to the ideals of the man who made *Lincoln*?

Why you should care: Des Pallières is ready for his close-up and international debut. In a festival like Toronto (where in 2008, *Parc* hid snugly in amongst the 300+ films), an Arnaud des Pallières or an Alex van Warmerdam isn't going to get a lot of exposure. But slot them in the Competition and we take note. So while it seems disingenuous to say this could be the beginning of something great for des Pallières, the director does admittedly have a big month ahead of him. And why not? His latest film features two actors who are just coming down from career-best performances (besides Mads Mikkelsen and *The Hunt*, many thought Denis Lavant's chameleon *Holy Motors* performance was parfait).



ROMAN POLANSKI **LA VÉNUM À LA FOURRURE (VENUS IN FUR)**



Background: Polish-French; born Paris, France 1933.

Known for / style: *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *Chinatown* (1974), *The Pianist* (2002), *The Ghost Writer* (2010); directing both for film and stage; adapting plays for the screen; acting in addition to directing; experimenting with informal trilogies (notably the "apartment trilogy"); films with ambiguous endings; depicting the human psyche as something complex and unstable; themes of violence and paranoia.

Notable accolades: In his many decades as a filmmaker, Polanski has picked up some of the top prizes in the business. High on the list is his Academy Award for Best Director (*The Pianist*, nominated also for Best Picture in 2003), his Palme d'Or (*The Pianist*, 2002), his three BAFTA Awards (*The Pianist* taking Best Film and the David Lean Award for Direction; *Chinatown* for Best Direction), his Berlin Bears (Gold for 1966's *Cul-de-sac*, Silver for 1965's *Repulsion* and 2010's *The Ghost Writer*), and his Venice Little Golden Lion (*Carnage*, 2011). In 1993, Venice gave Polanski a Career Golden Lion, while in 2004, Karlovy Vary gave him a Special Prize for Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema.

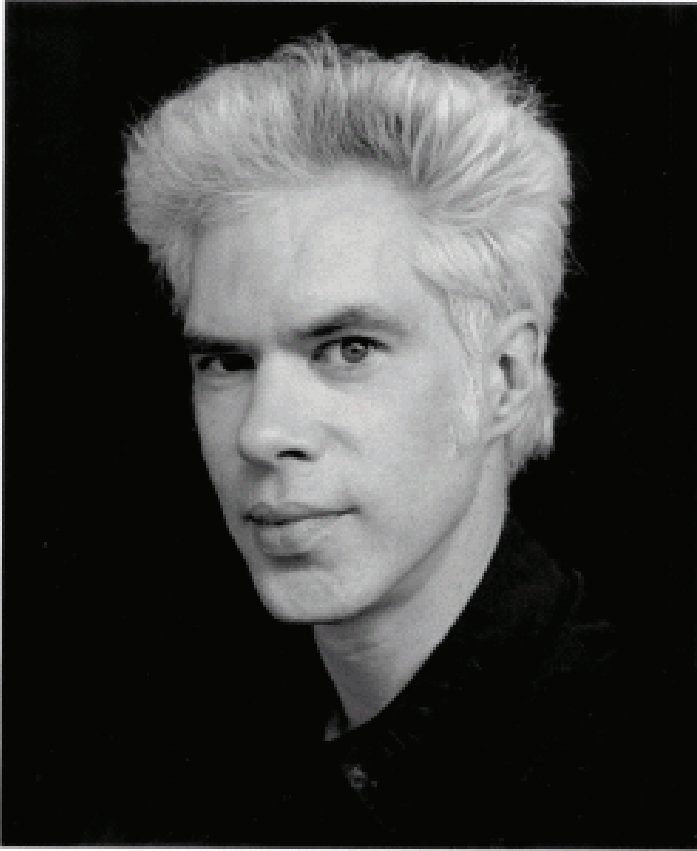
Previous Cannes appearances: Coming to Cannes since the early 1970s, Polanski has debuted two films in Competition: *The Tenant* (1976) and *The Pianist* (2002), the latter winning the Palme d'Or. Outside the Palme race, however, Polanski has done it all: 1972's *Macbeth* and 1986's *Pirates* played out of Competition, and in 1994, Polanski acted in Giuseppe Tornatore Competition film *A Pure Formality*. Furthermore, in 2007, Polanski participated in anthology film *To Each His Own Cinema*, which was programmed out of Competition, while in 2012, Polanski's 1979 *Tess* played in the Cannes Classics sidebar. Also last year was Laurent Bouzereau's *Roman Polanski: A Film Memoir*, a Special Screening selection. Finally, Polanski has been on the Competition jury twice: once in

1968 as a general member, and once in 1991 as the President.

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *La Vénus à la Fourrure* (*Venus in Fur*), an adaptation of the David Ives play of the same name (which was inspired by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's 1870 novella *Venus in Furs*). The French-language drama follows stage director Thomas (Mathieu Amalric, also in Arnaud Desplechin's Competition title *Jimmy P.*) who is desperate to cast a lead actress in his newest play, entirely dissatisfied with the day's tryouts. But Thomas allows one more audition: the enigmatic and erotic Vanda (Emmanuelle Seigner, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*) who nails the part and beguiles Thomas with sexual attraction. The audition gains steam, and Thomas becomes obsessed...

Could it win the Palme? Welcome to the trickiest film of the festival. First things first: with the excellent *Carnage* behind him, Polanski's latest stage adaptation should be something worth writing home about. But in terms of the Palme d'Or and its awards potential, however, the situation gets hazier: following his September 2009 arrest in Zurich, Polanski has been the subject of renewed scrutiny towards his 1977 crime (Polanski was charged with sexually abusing a 13-year-old girl). The topic has been covered in a number of recent documentaries, and since 1978, Polanski has been unable to enter the United States or countries that may extradite him there (he fled the States hours before his sentencing). Here's where things get weird, though: we already know Polanski won the Palme d'Or for *The Pianist*, but then again, 2002 was the year David Lynch was the President of the jury (in 2009, Lynch signed a "Free Polanski" petition alongside other prominent Hollywood types, including Woody Allen and Martin Scorsese). In other words, Lynch had no qualms giving him the prize; indeed, he is a vocal champion of Polanski. However, conspicuously missing from the 2009 petition was Steven Spielberg, a man who once offered Polanski the directing gig for *Schindler's List*. So the question remains: when it comes time to name a Palme winner, is Polanski's name too muddy for Spielberg to associate himself with? And how will the rest of his jury feel, with none having signed the Free Polanski petition? Let us not forget, too, that Polanski's curmudgeonly behaviour at a Cannes 2007 press conference alongside dozens of his fellow directors—leaving pre-emptively on account of boredom—has not done him any favors.



JIM JARMUSCH **ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE**

Background: American; born Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, 1953.

Known for / style: *Dead Man* (1995), *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999), *Broken Flowers*; experimenting with vignettes; deadpan cameras; creating both features and shorts; dark comedy and minimalist structures across a variety of genres.

Notable accolades: Jarmusch is the proud owner of a Palme d'Or—but not for any of his features (his 1993 short *Coffee and Cigarettes III* landed the top prize of the Court Métrage program). Other Cannes wins include the Grand Prix (*Broken Flowers*), the Camera d'Or (Jarmusch's 1984 debut, *Stranger than Paradise*), and an award for Best Artistic Contribution (*Mystery Train*, 1989).

Previous Cannes appearances: Jarmusch and the Festival have a storied past, going back nearly 30 years (*Stranger than Paradise* opened in a parallel section in 1984). Since then, he has played in the Long Métrage Competition five times (*Down by Law*, 1986; *Mystery Train*, 1989; *Dead Man*, 1995; *Ghost Dog*, 1999; *Broken Flowers*, 2005), once in the Court Métrage Competition (1993's *Coffee and Cigarettes III*), and once in Un Certain Regard (2002's *Ten Minutes Older*). Jarmusch was also interviewed for out-of-Competition documentary *Z Channel: A Magnificent Obsession* (2004).

Film he's bringing to Cannes: *Only Lovers Left Alive*, a vampire romance featuring Tom Hiddleston (*The Avengers*), Tilda Swinton (*We Need To Talk About Kevin*), Mia Wasikowska (*Stoker*), Anton Yelchin (*Like Crazy*), and John Hurt (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*). Rekindling a centuries-old love after passing for mundane humans, the romance of Adam (Hiddleston) and Eve (Swinton) is interrupted by Eve's chaotic younger sister Ava (Wasikowska).

Could it win the Palme? Jarmusch's cast is strong and his hand is steady. The formula works on paper, of course, but the genre might be out of place. But it doesn't really matter if the Jury isn't interested, as Jarmusch has already won most everything Cannes has to offer (though some may argue his Court Métrage Palme d'Or isn't as impressive as a feature-length counterpart). With last year's *Amour* win, Michael Haneke did nothing if not prove winning streaks do predictably occur, and Jarmusch has yet to leave any given decade of Cannes Film Festivals empty-handed. Off the top, though, Tilda Swinton seems to have spent the last few months playing the game, so to speak; her performance work at the MoMA served as a reminder that she is a true *artiste*. Swinton has never won a prize at Cannes, despite having won Best Supporting Actress awards from both BAFTA and the AMPAS (2007's *Michael Clayton*). If Eve is a juicy enough character for Swinton to sink her teeth into, it's hard to see a short-list of Best Actress potentials that doesn't include her name on it (and with Lynne Ramsay of *We Need To Talk About Kevin* aboard the Jury, Swinton has a ready ally).

Why you should care: That *Only Lovers Left Alive* is a late addition (announced after the April 18 Official Selection reveal) says little of its relative worth: we know that Jarmusch and Cannes are inseparable, regardless of quality. But besides that (and of course besides Jarmusch's unique and exciting filmography), there's really only one other thing that matters here: this vampire romance ain't *Twilight*.

